

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 and 11-20 will remain pending in the current Application upon entering this Amendment. Claims 1 and 14 have been amended, and claims 10 and 21 have been cancelled. Applicants submit that the amendments do not add new matter to the current Application. All the amendments herein have been made in order to clarify the claims and not for prior art reasons. Applicants also submit that (1) no amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein, and (2) no amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless Applicants have argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants submitted an Information Disclosure Statement listing references cited in a foreign search report on July 31, 2003. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide an initialed copy of the PTO/SB/08 form which lists these references. (Note that Applicants have already received an initialed copy of the PTO 1449 form which listed those references submitted concurrently with the filing of the current Application).

Rejection of claims 1-9 and 11-21 under 35 U.S.C. 102

With respect to claim 1, the Examiner has indicated that claim 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 10 and have thus cancelled claim 10. Applicants submit that amended claim 1 is allowable, as indicated by the Examiner.

With respect to claim 14, Applicants have amended claim 14 to include a limitation similar to that of allowable claim 10. Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 14 is also allowable for at least those reasons which apply to amended claim 1.

Claims 2-9, 11-13, and 15-20 all depend directly or indirectly from allowable claim 1 or 14, and are therefore also allowable for at least those reasons which apply to claims 1 and 14. Note that Applicants have cancelled claim 21.

Conclusion

Although Applicants may disagree with statements made by the Examiner in reference to the claims and the cited references, Applicants are not discussing all these statements in the current Office Action, yet reserve the right to address them at a later time if necessary.

Applicants respectfully solicit allowance of the pending claims. Contact me if there are any issues regarding this communication or the current Application.

If Applicant has overlooked any additional fees, or if any overpayment has been made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to credit or debit Deposit Account 502117.

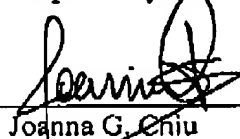
Respectfully submitted,

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